

Indian Opinion

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NOTES AND NEWS

GREAT indignation is felt in India over the recent legislation passed by the Union Parliament. A crowded public meeting of the citizens of Ahmedabad was held under the presidentship of Seth Mangaldas Girdherdas. Rao Bahadur Ramanbhai Nilkanth proposed and Mr. Gopalrao Dabholker, vakil, seconded a resolution protesting against the Asiatic (Land and Trading) Amendment Act recently passed in the Union Parliament. The Hon. Mr. Harilal Desai proposed and Mr. Jivanlal Desai seconded a resolution expressing sympathy with the Indian residents of the Transvaal who are fighting for their elementary rights of British citizenship with courage and patience. Both the resolutions were unanimously adopted.

The following resolution was passed at a meeting of the Managing Committee of the Bombay Branch of the National Home Rule League:

"That this meeting expresses its deep sympathy with the British Indians of the Transvaal in their struggle for liberty and for preservation of the ordinary rights of British Citizenship against heavy odds, and congratulates them on their courage and patient endurance in carrying on the struggle, and heartily assures them of their continuous help from the Mother Country."

Resolutions of protest against the Asiatic Land and Trading Amendment Act passed by the South African Legislature were passed by the Deccan Sabha, Poona, and at a public meeting at Akola. The Vice-Chairman of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, has also sent a telegram protesting against the legislation.

The following cable has been sent to the Colonial Secretary and to the Secretary of State for India by the Hon. Mir Asad Ali Khan, chairman of the public meeting held on the 11th July:—"The citizens of Madras emphatically protest against the Asiatic Bill of Transvaal, which will in a few years reduce the descendants of the existing Indian families to helotry without property, rights or professions and drive them from the country of their birth to seek new homes. The legislation is based on the gross misreading of 1914 settlement. The meeting urges interference. The legislation is producing greatest indignation. The first part of the Bill implies refusal of future licences in gold districts and the second part interferes with the long-enjoyed rights."

Intimation has been received that the orders under Martial Law passed on Mr. C. F. Andrews against his entrance into the Punjab has been withdrawn.

The special correspondent of *Hindu* cabling from London under date July 27, 1919:—"The termination of Mr. Polak's editorship of *India* is attributed to the inauguration of a new policy. That means henceforth that the journal will back up the Congress' resolutions. I hear Miss Normantov, for sometime editorial assistant, will conduct the paper under Mr. Kelkar's guidance."

Mr. Merriman, speaking in the House of Assembly on the Peace Treaty, pointed out that India had equality with ourselves, and if Indians in this country had grievances they must be depended upon to take them to the League of Nations:

Mr. C. B. Mehta, a well-known Indian storekeeper of Durban, was treated in a disrespectful manner by a tram conductor last Sunday. He was ordered to get up from his seat and stand, but rather than submit to such treatment, he left the car. It is alleged that the conductor pushed him violently. Mr. Mehta has written a letter to the Tramways Manager on the subject, demanding an inquiry. These incidents are becoming much too common.

We are informed by the Secretaries that the fourth anniversary of the Tongaat Andhra Dharma Padasala will take place on Sunday the 28th instant commencing at 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. All delegates and friends are requested to be present. Communications should be addressed to the Secretaries, Box 24, Tongaat.

The *Loksaugraha*, a new Marathi daily of Poona, (says the *Mahratta*), has published in a letter the bravado of a European soldier who was in the same compartment in a railway carriage where Mr. Gandhi was seated. The passengers, who happened to see Mr. Gandhi, were bowing respectfully to him, and this roused the curiosity of that son of the Mars. On inquiry he came to know that the person so much loved and respected by the people was no other than Mr. Gandhi. That name at once startled him, and he indignantly exclaimed:—"Oh! he is the same Gandhi who misled so many young men in the Punjab." "Oh! I would hang him by the neck." Mr. Gandhi remained unperturbed and only smiled at his antics. The braggart in khaki could not do anything as there were other men in the compartment and on the platform, and left the carriage muttering threats and grinding his teeth. The incident only shows how some Europeans are intensely hating the saintly personage, whom his devotees and his noble opponents even respect and admire. It is such incidents which provoke bitter feelings between the two communities and better it will be if these sons of the Mars are taught some lessons of courtesy and good manners towards Indians.

The following telegram has been sent to the Acting Prime Minister, Pretoria, by the Port Elizabeth British Indian Council:—"British Indian community records its sense of the great loss the Union of South Africa has sustained by the death of the Right Hon. Louis Botha, and its appreciation of his past services, noble patriotic aspiration, and ideal of statesmanship, and tenders respectful condolences to Mrs. Botha and relatives and the Union Government."

Mr. R. G. Teikamdas, ex-President of the Cape British Indian Association, Port Elizabeth, is leaving for India via Kimberley, Johannesburg and Durban.

A TRAGEDY OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

OUR highly-esteemed well-wisher, Mr. C. F. Andrews, who visited this country in 1913-14 in connection with the great struggle, is contributing a series of articles to the *Rambay Chronicle* on "The Position of Indians in the Empire." In the first of these articles Mr. Andrews refers to the return of the Maharajah of Bikanir from Versailles, Paris and London. His Highness has given a glowing account of the seats of honour that were accorded to the delegates representing India at the Peace Conference, and he congratulates India on her equality of status with South Africa, Canada and other dominions.

"But (writes Mr. Andrews) his Highness passed over in ominous silence one further piece of news, which called for no congratulation. When an attempt was made at the Peace Conference to include, in the preamble of the League of Nations, a brief statement asserting the principle of racial equality, this proposal was rejected, as one that was likely to wreck the whole Conference,—South Africa and Canada being loudest of all in their opposition. Japan had been the first to bring forward this proposal for racial equality. But the great European Powers seemed to know beforehand exactly how far she would go. Her *amour propre* was satisfied without much difficulty in other directions."

Mr. Andrews then describes the nature of the bargain between Japan and the Great Powers and how the liberty and independence of Korea was sacrificed in a shameful manner. So Japan was satisfied with her own gains and the question of racial equality was shelved. It was left to China to claim that racial equality should be openly declared and that this "battering with other people's territory" should cease.

"But she was not heard. She had no latest scientific weapons of destruction to make forcibly insistent her demand for equal human treatment. And when at length not a semblance, even, of justice was done in regard to her Shantung province, when all discussion of racial equality was disallowed, she withdrew altogether from the Treaty, refusing to be a party to her own disruption and degradation. Yet of so little account was she, among all those powerful Powers, that this most significant action, in refusing to sign the Treaty, was at first passed by without any one's notice. Even the reporters, who were eager to record for their newspapers every look on the face of M. Clemenceau or Mr. Lloyd George or President Wilson, failed to take note of those pathetically silent Chinese figures standing aloof and apart."

Mr. Andrews asks the significant question: "Where was India all this while?" Shepherded by the Secretary of State, the representatives from India raised no voice of indignant protest on behalf of the helpless Koreans, or the despoiled Chinese, or on behalf of the equality of all races within the new Parliament of Man. No delegate from India left the Peace Conference as a mark of disapproval. No delegate from India refused to sign the Peace Treaty. And so once more, in a way that has almost grown monotonous of late, the just and righteous demands for a concrete recognition of equality were sacrificed for a shadowy promise, for a formal recognition. It was true, as the Maharajah stated eloquently in his speech, that the Indian Delegates at the Peace Conference, headed by the Secretary

of State, were accorded the same rank and dignity as the delegates from South Africa and Canada. But, even while they were thus seated side by side at Versailles, the South African Union Parliament (in which Indians have not only no seats, but no votes) was busy passing the most drastic laws, which deprived Indians even of the very meagre trading and land rights that are still their own."

After recalling pathetic scenes in South Africa, Mr. Andrews concludes a brilliant article with this graphic world-picture—

"I turn back from these daily scenes in South Africa, which make up the common every day life of the Indian people, and then I look once again at those seats of equal rank and honour granted to the Indian delegates at the Peace Conference; I can picture the whole scene—the South African delegates and the Indian delegates actually sitting side by side. And all seems to go well until the crucial issue arises—the concrete proposal of racial equality. Then the mask, for a moment, is taken off and the delegates can see each other's faces without disguise. As I turn over these two vivid pictures in my mind—the Kaffir and Indian locations at Pretoria, on the one hand,—the equal seats of honour at Versailles, on the other, the question comes back again and again,—would it not have been more dignified, when the issue of race equality had once been raised, if the Indian delegates had silently taken their place side by side with those disregarded and unhonoured Chinese representatives, who refused to sign the Treaty? The neglect and contempt with which they were treated, for their action, had at least this mark about it. It set them on the same level as their fellow-countrymen in the world outside. It revealed the naked truth. The seats of equal honour were an empty show, while the fundamental question of race equality, which the Conference shirked, remained unsolved."

Comment on our part is unnecessary. We endorse every word written by Mr. Andrews. We are ashamed of India's representatives."

IF SOUTH AFRICA WERE INDEPENDENT

WHAT WOULD THE INDIAN POSITION BE?

As a result of the recent increased interest in the position of Indians in South Africa, "A Deep Student of the Indian Question," in some views published in *The Star* (Johannesburg) points out that the question has so far not been solved for the reason that people have not recognised that it is not a local one, and thus it cannot be decided by local methods. With regard to the British Empire, it must be remembered that although like all other States, it rests on force, yet no other State requires the free assent of its component parts so much as the British Empire. Without that free assent the Empire would collapse like a pack of cards because there is not sufficient force to hold it together. That assent is obtained by bringing into play certain principles of equality and justice recognised and appreciated by its subjects; hence the Indians demand the basis of their British citizenship.

It is often said from the public platform and elsewhere, says the gentleman in *The Star*, that if it were not for the British connection South Africa could solve the Indian question by expelling the Indians, and that it is only our unfortunate partnership to the Empire which prevents us from having a free hand, but quite the contrary is the case. If we had not that power of the British Empire behind us we would not dare to deal with Indians even as we are doing. Thus, if we were independent to-day, Great Britain, by virtue of the